

Greetings American Legion Family,

I would like to thank each of the District Presidents for your hard work preparing and holding the District meetings. You all did an amazing job. A heartwarming thanks to everyone who has supported my projects. Whether it be by purchasing raffle tickets or donating funds. Thank you to the American Legion family of Edgar M. Boyd Post and Unit 37 of Williston for hosting the homecoming event for me and Commander Brown. A special thank you to everyone who attended. I will cherish the wonderful memories from that evening.

I have heard the question asked: "Why can great granddaughters no longer join the American Legion Auxiliary?" The eligibility change was made in 2019 through National in response to a ruling by the IRS. Membership could only be within 2 degrees of separation from the veteran under which he/she is eligible. As it was explained at a recent National Convention Membership training, until Congress chooses to change the eligibility, the American Legion Auxiliary must follow this decision. Current members that are great granddaughters may retain their existing membership.

Our American Legion Family recently lost fellow Legionnaire and Past Department Commander Floyd Semenko. Someone shared that you could count on him sitting in the audience making his "KISS" lips, reminding you to "Keep It Short Stupid." One may think this gesture rude or uncalled for, however, I think we could all learn something from Floyd. When leading a meeting, it is important to get to the point. If we can keep it short, we maintain the attention of those we are speaking to. A presentation over 5 minutes will cause your audience to stop listening. When one is holding a meeting, it is best to keep the meeting under one hour. If longer than that, your audience may already have checked out and you will not be able to maintain their attention.

This holiday season, send cards to hospitalized veterans and perhaps prepare some treats for those who may be shut-in at home or a nursing facility. It truly touches their heart and shows that you care and support them.

As Auxiliary members, let us all remember to "Be kind and open to new ideas." All of us can be mentors. Share your ideas with those around you and invite members to become involved. We need every member, and everyone is important to our unit and organization. Listen to what they have to say, remain open minded, show compassion, and be willing to learn new things. As we continue to grow in our membership, please keep these thoughts in mind. Try to make everyone feel included and special.

Happy Holidays and I look forward to seeing you at the Winter Conference in January 2023.

Sandra Petermann